

From: Brett R
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/27/02 7:17pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a programmer who has been working in the computer industry for about five years now.

People mostly choose their operating system for what applications they can run. And so the obvious way of curtailing Microsoft's monopoly in the operating system market is to make them allow other operating systems to run necessary applications, or at least applications fully interoperable with the Windows versions.

I'm surprised and upset by the revised proposed final judgement's neglect of this obvious action.

Everyone I've ever tried to introduce Linux to eventually came up with the question "can I run Microsoft Word in Linux?". When they found out they couldn't, they usually started to dismiss the idea. Microsoft's monopoly of the operating system will survive as long as does the exclusivity of their middleware.

We certainly can't expect Microsoft to release fully functional versions of all of their middleware for all of the various competing operating systems. But we can and should require them to release complete working APIs so that anyone who wants to can make compatible software that will run on other platforms.

Microsoft will howl that this will be very damaging to their business, but the court's responsibility is not to protect Microsoft. In fact, they're at the bottom of the list of those the court should protect - they've broken the law. The court's responsibility is to take action aimed at restoring competitive conditions to the operating system market. The RPFJ can't do this because it doesn't address the middleware problem.

In fact, the RPFJ exacerbates the problem because in those areas dealing with the release of APIs, Microsoft is given extensive discretion over to whom

it must release them. Microsoft has to see the recipients as "viable businesses", which shoots down most Open Source projects because they're creating out of love for innovation and community and not out of commercial interests.

I have communicated only a small portion of my complaints about the RPFJ. Even in the limited scope of the suggested action against Microsoft, I see many loopholes that we can expect them to exploit (please see <http://www.kegel.com/remedy/remedy2.html>). I doubt the RPFJ will do anything to revive competitive conditions.

Brett Rasmussen

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